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## SOME RESULTS OF THE WELSH INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION ACT

### A CRITICAL SUMMARY.

This paper must necessarily be a history of beginnings, for at the present moment only one school under the scheme has actually begun work, though another is to begin almost immediately. But it is not often that educationists are able to observe the incubation, so to say, of an educational system; and the Intermediate Education movement in Wales therefore offers a peculiarly valuable and interesting opportunity for scientific observation and inference. It is thus rather a matter for congratulation than otherwise that the Act is being but slowly realized, since the phenomena connected with its development are thereby so much better adapted for the purposes of the student. An endeavour will be made to give both an analytical and historical presentment, in outline, of the subject.

*Origin of the Act.* A few words will be sufficient to indicate the history of the movement which resulted in the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889. The spirit of artistic and literary culture, which is so characteristic of Wales, and finds both its nurture and expression in the national and local Eisteddfods, and in the competitive meetings which occur in almost every hamlet, led to an agitation for wider borders and larger scope in the educational system of the country, and a more ready and full access to educational opportunities. Of the urgency of the need for more generous provision of schools and teachers, the Schools Inquiry Commission Report gives the completest evidence. This report shows that in most parts of Wales the supply of grammar schools was lamentably inadequate, and that the endowments for secondary education were few and small. The commissioners estimated that about sixteen boys out of every thousand of the population should be receiving a secondary education; but they found that in Wales there was only provision for about three in every thousand, whilst not quite two in every thousand were actually in

attendance at places of secondary education. This was the case in 1866. In 1881 a parliamentary committee was appointed to enquire into the condition of intermediate and higher education in Wales, and it reported that there were only twenty-seven endowed grammar schools in the whole of Wales and Monmouthshire. In these there were 1,540 pupils. Of private schools giving a secondary education there existed 152, having an aggregate of 4,158 pupils. These schools were very small ones and the tuition fee paid by the pupils did not exceed £6 yearly on the average. The committee say, reasonably enough: "Even assuming, as we are hardly justified in doing, that the proprietors of these schools are for the most part efficient teachers, it is difficult to understand how, under such conditions, the necessary requirements of a sound intermediate education can be satisfactorily met."

It was against such a condition of things educational that the national enthusiasm had to struggle, before the fierce light of public official enquiry had given emphasis to the evils. Of the reality and intense earnestness of the desire for higher education amongst the people, their efforts and sacrifices give conclusive evidence. Recognizing that the foundation of a good system of education must be based upon a supply of thoroughly qualified teachers, the first result of the educational movement was the foundation, through the aid of voluntary subscriptions, of the Normal college at Bangor, in 1862. This was followed, in 1872, by the inauguration of the more ambitious institution: the University College of Wales, at Aberystwyth. This has seen many vicissitudes, and experienced not a few serious crises, but it has been loyally and devotedly supported by staunch friends and workers. It is now probably one of the most flourishing university colleges in the united kingdom. A more magnificent evidence of, and tribute to, national enthusiasm for education can hardly be conceived, for it is the outcome as much of the generous pecuniary self-sacrifice of small farmers, miners, and labourers, as of the wisdom and patriotism of the leaders of the movement. It is said to have been subscribed to by 200,000 persons, and has been aptly called "the college of the people's pence."

The leaders of the movement, however, saw that but little really permeating or permanent effect could be produced by anything less than a thorough reorganization of educational agencies

in the principality, and a comprehensive and unified system of schools and colleges. The agitation was, therefore, directed into political and legislative channels and parliament was urged to accept a bill incorporating the suggestions made by the committee of enquiry in 1881. Already (in 1883) the recommendations of the committee had brought about the establishment of the University College of North Wales, at Bangor, and the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire, at Cardiff—each college receiving an annual grant of £4,000 from the treasury. The agitation for such an act became wide-spread, intense, and persistent. Public meetings on the subject were held all over the country, and petitions from almost every public body in Wales were sent to parliament. A happy issue attended this praiseworthy importunity and on the twelfth of August, 1889, the Welsh Intermediate Education Act received the royal assent. Clause 2 of the Act declares that “The purpose of this Act is to make further provision for the intermediate and technical education of the inhabitants of Wales and the county of Monmouth.”

*The Executive for the Act.* The Act itself prescribes that “there shall be appointed in every county . . . a joint education committee of the county council of such county consisting of three persons nominated by the county council, and two persons, being persons well acquainted with the conditions of Wales and wants of the people . . . nominated by the Lord President of her Majesty’s Privy Council.” It was also provided that such committees might act in concert. The result was that early in 1890 the committees for the counties of North Wales met together for a joint conference, and those in South Wales did similarly. Two or three conferences by these two separate bodies were held, and then they united and held a general conference of the joint education committees of Wales and Monmouthshire. The first meeting of this body was held at Shrewsbury on September 19th, 1890, since when eight or more meetings have been held. Mr. R. H. D. Acland, M. P.,—now Vice President of the Council with a seat in the Cabinet, which practically makes him Minister for Education—was elected permanent chairman, and to his sagacity, legislative ability, and real grasp of the question, the success of the conferences is largely due.

Before dealing with the actual work done by this body it will be well critically to observe their qualifications for the duties they were called upon to discharge. Three-fifths of the representatives were appointed by the county councils, and very closely reflected the general character of those bodies. There were actually on the body:—members of the “nobility and gentry” (as the phrase goes), clergymen (of the Established and Nonconformist churches), heads of university colleges and schools, medical men, prosperous tradesmen, official persons, and general busybodies, but not one who had given his life to a scientific study of, and practical work in, education. No real expert in the subject to be dealt with—the nearest approach to this being the chairman—no little leaven that might leaven the whole lump. There were those who knew a good deal of school management from the commercial aspect, but practically nothing of the school as an organism; those who had for many years done the work of educators without being educationists; many who neither knew nor professed to know about education; and others who knew a little about the many things of ordinary everyday life, but knew nothing much about anything. All, however, had the saving grace of intense earnestness, whole hearted devotion, ungrudging self-sacrifice, and unwearied energy for the good of Welsh education. Here, therefore, is a body of men who have to formulate a system, to realize, as far as may be, an educational ideal—to which also they have to give form and expression—and yet not one of them can fairly be called an educationist *i. e.* one who has a scientific grasp of the principles involved in education as an organism of knowledge, and whose mind has acquired the capacity of appreciating and estimating the value of new data. A body of empiricists dealing with empiricals.

But some of the members of this body were prejudiced by worse than ignorance, for they had had practice in wrong doing. As members of county councils they had been engaged in simply squandering money in blind endeavours to secure technical education. These men were full of the conviction that the proper persons to decide exactly how public money should be expended were those who paid the rates. They, and others, still cherish the idea that anybody is fit to be a teacher, if he has first learnt something himself, and much more, therefore, is a smart and suc-

cessful ratepayer fit to control the teacher and his work. Truly we are a nation of shopkeepers in these matters. That the above really represents their conception of the matter will be seen in the powers which are given to popularly elected governors, from whom no special knowledge or qualification is required. It is the most significant and suggestive criticism upon our education in the past, that the people have not yet learnt that the representation of brains is perhaps more important than the representation of heads. Popular control is a good thing and a right, but effective and economical control is equally good and right, and more desirable. Still, it must be admitted that, in spite of these drawbacks, much good work was done by the conference body, and that great credit is due to them for energy which they gave to the work, and the sound common sense with which, as a rule, they dealt with the subject.

*Some Determining Influences.* Undoubtedly the executive bodies were particularly fortunate in having been preceded in their work by the Schools Inquiry Commission, and the committee appointed to enquire into the condition of intermediate and higher education in Wales. The former gave a most comprehensive and exhaustive survey of the whole problem of secondary education with regard to finance, organization, curriculum, grading, accommodation, management, etc.—from the traditional and practical standpoint—whilst the latter gave definite recommendations as to the school accommodation required, the sources of revenue, the electing of governing bodies, the question of scholarships and exhibitions, the inspection of schools, etc., in Wales. Further, most of the suggestions given by both bodies, had been incorporated in the Act, so that they were both guided and limited in their work. Then there was the fact that the principality was in a state of excitement and agitation with regard to education so that much information which it would otherwise have been difficult, if not impossible, to procure was easily obtained, and many obscure abuses and needs were brought to light. The spirit of nationality had been deeply aroused and much was on the surface that would ordinarily have been deep down. There was a facility and fulness possible in investigation which is seldom to be met with. Those who had had much experience in secondary school work were

well represented, and exerted considerable influence. But, above all, there was an Assistant Charity Commissioner present at the conferences, who gave most valuable and varied help both by way of precept and precedent, quoted from the work of the charity commissioners under the Endowed Schools Act of 1869—the outcome of the Schools Inquiry Commission Report. Thus there was no lack of concrete information and example, as there was no want of energy or earnestness, in the work. The local element and influence was secured by public enquiries conducted by the joint committees. These enquiries took the form of receiving deputations from those who considered they had specific claims to advance, or by visits of the committees to various localities for purposes of investigation, such visits being previously announced and full publicity invited. Too much praise can hardly be given to such a method of procedure, which is so well calculated to enlist the sympathies of those most concerned and to secure the fullest possible opportunity for obtaining a knowledge of local wishes and wants. And it was with the materials obtained from the above mentioned sources that the conference of the joint committees proceeded to formulate schemes for the different counties. These schemes, though differing in detail, since the final word was with the separate local governing bodies, are as similar in their conception and form, as the outcome of the general conferences.

*Sources of Revenue.* The funds for the purposes of the Act are derived from:—(a) a county rate not exceeding a half-penny in the pound, (b) a grant from the treasury, depending upon the efficiency of the school, and not to exceed the amount yielded by the county rate, (c) any education endowments already existing, (d) any new endowments which may be given, (e) fees, (f) a sum of £34,000 per annum (for the whole of Wales and Monmouth), which unexpectedly became available for intermediate education, under the Local Taxation Act—originally intended as compensation money for the extinction of public-house licenses. It will be seen that there is a very definite and direct obligation laid upon those who immediately enjoy the advantages of the Act to contribute a considerable share of the money needed. Not only have the local people to pay thus through the local rates, but wherever one of the schools is located the inhabitants of that school district have to

raise a sum at least equivalent to, sometimes three or four times as large as the amount received from the general fund for the school building, in addition to providing a site. This is doubtless sound and sufficient check upon that extravagance and carelessness which so often arises in the local expenditure of money wholly drawn from imperial taxation. The revenue derivable from fees for tuition is comparatively small; for the annual fee per pupil only ranges from three to ten pounds. The charge for board and residence, when provided, ranges from £25 to £40 per session. The fees were designedly fixed at the lowest possible rate, so that they should not be prohibitive to the working classes.

*The Governing Bodies.* There are two governing bodies under each scheme, unless the scheme be for a county borough when there is only one, and women are eligible for election to them. These two bodies are called respectively the county governing body, and school managers—who constitute a school district governing body. The general character of these bodies may be inferred from the way in which they are appointed. In the case of the county governing body just over a half of the members are appointed by the county councils, one-fourth by the different bodies of school managers, one-tenth by university colleges, one-seventh is co-opted. The school managers are appointed as follows:—just over a half by the county council, one-sixth by the municipal or sanitary authority, one-fourth by the school boards in the district, and one-sixth by a university college (if in the neighbourhood). This may be regarded as typical, though, of course, considerable variations occur. There can be no doubt therefore as to what will be the prevailing tone of these bodies. All that was urged in adverse criticism of the joint committees which brought the scheme into form will hold with regard to their creations, and it is more than likely that as they reflect the constitution of their authors so will they also reflect their general characteristics. Omniscience as well as omnipotence is still attributed to the ratepayer.

The county governors are elected for three years, and have the following duties to discharge:—to receive, invest, and administer all funds; to provide and pay for the inspection and a yearly examination of all schools under the scheme, by competent examin-



ers unconnected with the schools; to provide and contribute to the payment of travelling teachers to teach such subjects as may from time to time be determined; to regulate, after consultation with school managers, the scholarships at the schools, to regulate, in concert with the school managers and with the other county governing bodies, the transfer of pupils and scholarships from one district to another; and to establish, if they think fit, a pension fund for head teachers—to which head teachers must themselves contribute.

The functions of school managers, who are also elected for three years, are as follows:—to provide, after consultation with the county governing body, proper school buildings, and to keep them in proper repair; to appoint and dismiss, subject to specified conditions, all teachers; to prescribe, within the limits fixed by the scheme, the general subjects of instruction and the relative prominence and value to be assigned to each group of subjects; to arrange the school terms, vacations, holidays, the payment of day scholars, and the number and payments of boarders; to regulate the exceptionally early admission or late leaving of pupils; to make regulations for religious instruction, if any; to award prizes, if they think fit; to award the scholarships, exhibitions, and bursaries; to allot the scholarships for pupils from elementary schools; and generally to advise the county governing body.

From this it will be seen that those who reflect the general intelligence of the men in the street have the power of making or marring a national scheme of education. That they cannot go very grievously wrong is almost certain, but it is not less certain that they are not likely to display that thorough grasp of the principles of education, that broad and generous sympathy for really intellectual and moral as against merely superficial and utilitarian results, and that deeper insight into the fundamental and far reaching effect of true education on the life of the nation, which are so absolutely necessary to a high ideal and an effective hold on the real. It is true that the empiricist in education will not be unrepresented, but even he is in a negligible minority, whilst the educationist is not insisted upon and is very unlikely even to creep in unawares.

There is food for very serious reflection in the fact that school managers have to “prescribe the general subjects of instruction,

and the relative prominence and value to be assigned to each group of subjects." This constitutes a most pernicious opportunity for your plain practical man who flatters himself on his common sense and knowledge of what man wants to know for purposes of everyday life. Here is the opening for faddists and maddists—if one may coin such a term. Imagine, to take an extreme case, the successful coal merchant, the ancient squire, and the local demagogue, seriously discussing such a matter as the above! True it is provided that "before exercising any power or making any regulations under the last foregoing clause, the school managers shall consult the head master in such a manner as to give him full opportunity for the expression of his views," but the dogmatism of ignorance and the consequence of office are dangerous rivals to to such a safeguard. Here surely, in the sense of ignorance against knowledge, "fools rush in where angels fear to tread". How strangely such procedure contrasts with the authoritative and scientifically informed control of the German system.

The reasons given by the members of the conference of the joint committees who are responsible for the schemes are suggestive of the spirit in which the question was approached. One speaker said "It seems to me rather unreasonable that the subscribers should have three representatives and the county council only one, for the latter may be contributing from £100 to £250 a year to each school, while the former may have subscribed altogether only a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds." Others said: "We have left it entirely for further consideration how far the gift of a lump sum should entitle a person to representation for ever" (for ever!); "subscribers rather than donors are to have representation"; "there shall be a majority of one for the county council on the body, and there is an additional reason for this now, in that the money from the new grant comes to us from the county council". Always the idea that the payment of taxes gives both the right and the fitness for legislative and executive functions. It is true that a protest was occasionally made on behalf of experience and knowledge, but it met with a misguided response in the granting of a beggarly array of school boards representatives, who can seldom lay claim to anything but the merest pittance of empirical and incidental experience.

*The Curriculum.* It is provided that religious instruction may be given, and that "instruction shall also be given in the following subjects:—Reading, writing, and arithmetic; geography; history, including scripture history; English grammar, composition, and literature; drawing, freehand, geometrical, and mechanical; mathematics; Latin; at least one modern foreign European language; at least one branch of natural science, with special attention to the industries of the district; vocal music; and drill, or other physical exercises; (and for girls only, in the place of natural science as above, domestic economy and the laws of health). Instruction may also be given in the following subjects:—Greek; Welsh grammar, composition, and literature; mechanics; the principles of agriculture; navigation; mensuration; shorthand; and working in wood and iron (and for girls only, cookery and dress-making); and in such other subjects of intermediate or technical education as the school managers, after consultation with the county governing body, may think fit to introduce." The range and limit of subjects was prescribed by the Welsh Intermediate Act, and is obviously an extensive and generous scheme. The different county schemes show a palpable surrender to the craze for so-called technical education, but fortunately the Act specially provides that the curriculum "shall not include teaching the practice of any trade or industry, or employment." The schemes involve a well deserved concession to the national sentiment, and a tribute to the patriotism of the young Wales party, in the inclusion of "Welsh grammar, composition, and literature". With regard to religious instruction "no religious catechism, or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught to a scholar", and there is a "conscience clause" allowing exemption from religious instruction and observances, if this be claimed in writing by parents. The scheme says "instrumental music may be taught, on the written request of a parent, but at an extra fee at the rate of not less than £3 a year."

It is satisfactory to find that the fetishism of classical learning is ignored, for both idealism and utilitarianism in education approve of its receiving less homage. Fortunately the requirements of practical life in causing the substituting of modern languages have not thereby excluded any necessary element of mental discipline. Not less encouraging is it to note that it is insisted that

“classes in scientific and technical subjects shall in all cases be associated with sufficient experimental demonstration and practical teaching”. Altogether the curriculum recommends itself to the educationist as comprising all the necessary material for complete educational training.

Some interesting and instructive proceedings took place at the conferences on Sloyd and physical exercises. A sub-committee furnished a report on manual instruction (including Sloyd and English carpentry), in which the educational advantages of the subjects were fully reviewed, and the practical details and cost of working the various schemes were set forth. The chief reasons urged in favor of physical exercises were that organized games fostered *esprit de corps* and prevented loafing—a very concrete expression for the moral results of physical culture. Manual instruction was advocated because it gives “that general handiness in the use of hands and fingers, and that power of working together with hand and eye which lies at the bottom of all skill”. It was further argued that: (1) it obviates that feeling of contempt for manual labour which is too widespread at the present day”; (2) and it does “not only not interfere with the ordinary school work, but actually improves that school work . . . because it forces the child to think . . . [as] it is quite impossible to get a thing up by rote”. Certainly this is not very profound pedagogy, but it is passable practice.

*The Staff.* In this matter again the competency of the lay mind for professional purposes was severely tested. So far as can be discovered from the authorized reports of the conferences, there was never any general suggestion or disposition to definitely require evidence of a scientific knowledge of education and professional training from those who might be appointed on the staff of a school. And this in spite of the fact that the chairman, in speaking upon the desirability of a central governing body for Wales, said: “And if we are men of foresight, we shall consider other questions. There is the question of the training of teachers. If we are to assist in raising an able body of teachers, we should consider the subject of training. Nothing is more ridiculous than the way in which many private schools get young fellows from the universities without the slightest idea of how to teach, and they

practice upon our unfortunate sons, until they have learnt the way". Previously to this he had written, in a little hand-book to the Act, still more explicitly: "As soon as possible after the schools have been established it should be provided that no teacher, male or female, should be appointed who has not some certificate both of adequate training in teaching and adequate knowledge." But, to all appearance, this is the voice of one crying in the wilderness. The voice of the conference was raised loud and long over the solution of the, to them, tremendous problem: who is to appoint and dismiss the teachers. Much ingenuity and great verbosity was displayed in deciding between the fitness of the county governing body and the school managers to appoint head teachers, and between these bodies and head teachers to appoint assistant teachers. In this matter the conference found its feet and fairly revelled in enjoyment. Pages of talk declare their appreciation of the topic. Here is something to be managed, a power to be exercised, places to be obtained, the spirit of officialism to be gratified, and a real opportunity for realizing the sweets of office. Not that it is undesirable that teachers should be appointed by such bodies, or that the members of them should not obtain every gratification from the exercise of their powers; but it seems not too much to ask that the first consideration should be to secure the thorough fitness of the teachers—of which mere empirical experience is the most unreliable evidence.

The only definite requirement insisted upon was that head masters should have taken a university degree—though even this is not universal, for one scheme accepts certificates in science and art subjects as equivalent. Assistant teachers are merely required to be men and women. The views of the omnipotent ratepayer, on the subject of professional fitness, were unequivocally declared in discussing the appointment of teachers in manual instruction. Thus say these wise ones:—(1) "We could find a fair number of intelligent mechanics, who could teach the children in the schools thoroughly"; (2) "most efficiently and most satisfactorily . . . it can be done in this way by a girl who has had no special training"; (3) "what about those artizans who have gone to college and have taken their degrees? . . . I think it would be a great mistake not to utilize them"; (4) "I have no doubt that a remark

as to the inability of such men [artizans] to teach would apply ten years ago, but to-day it does not apply. [The Chairman.] And do you think they would make good teachers? . . . Yes, far better than those who understand little more than the theory"; (5) "a man who is really intelligent and cultivated, though he is an artizan, will be no doubt an admirable teacher". It is plain from this that we are in urgent need of schools in which to train our managers of education, as well as the teachers.

A very valuable report, based on information received in reply to questions addressed to school authorities in the United States and Scotland, on the employment of women teachers was read before the conference. It contained overwhelming evidence in favour of employing women for the younger children, both boys and girls; but no resolution, expressing the opinion of the conference on the matter, seems to have been passed.

Some discussion took place as to the number of pupils to be reckoned for each teacher, and it seemed to be thought that about twenty pupils to one teacher would be a good working average in a school of about 100 pupils, with an ordinarily full curriculum—the head teacher to count for twenty. This conclusion was based upon the evidence supplied from one or two schools known to members of the conference.

It was considered that salaries for head teachers should range from £200 upwards, and for assistant teachers from £80 upwards.

*The Pupils.* The conception of the place of the new intermediate schools in the educational system is clearly shown in the manner in which the supply of pupils is provided for. The central idea is that a regular contingent of scholars will come from the elementary schools. Hence very full consideration was given to the age and acquirements which should constitute the minimum qualification for admission. The general feeling seemed to be that such candidates should have passed the fifth standard—*i. e.* be able to read from a standard author with fluency, ease, and expression; to write from memory the substance of a short story read out twice; to work the ordinary rules in arithmetic up to simple fractions; and have some knowledge of grammar, geography, and history with probably a smattering of science and a training

in drawing—or an equivalent examination. But no scholar, as a rule, is to be admitted under the age of eight years. Some schemes, however, accept a slightly lower level of acquirements, *viz.* the fourth standard. It was held that the money granted for intermediate schools could not legitimately be spent on providing education for children below this standard, since the work was already being efficiently done at the public expense in elementary schools. At the same time it was felt that the difference in curriculum justified the point of departure being put at about the fourth or fifth standard in the elementary school. But it was recognised that there would certainly be some conflict between what are called higher grade elementary schools and the intermediate schools, inasmuch as their syllabuses are almost identical for the most part. The exact form and consequences of this could not be estimated, however, and it was left to the sequence of events to decide as to the best course to adopt.

Of the county scholarships to be given to pupils in the schools, “not less than one-half of the whole number . . . shall consist of total exemption from tuition fees, and shall be awarded . . . to children who are, and have for not less than three years been scholars in any public elementary schools.” Also any residue of funds is to be devoted to increasing these scholarships and to establishing “bursaries, consisting of payments of an amount sufficient to cover the estimated expenses of travelling to and from the school, and of books and stationery, and other incidental expenses of scholars from public elementary schools. These bursaries shall be awarded by the school managers to those applicants who in their opinion shall from their pecuniary circumstances be most in need of them, and not on the result of an examination.” Thus a very generous opportunity and inducement is given to pupils from elementary schools to enter the new schools, and thus enjoy the advantages of a course which is a continuation of the education which they have already received, and a development into those new and higher branches which constitute a direct preparation for a university course. To complete the opportunity thus offered it is ordered that “the county governing body shall out of the funds set apart for the purpose, maintain exhibitions to be called county exhibitions, each of a yearly value of not less than £10, tenable for not more than three years at any univer-

sity or university college or other institution of university, professional, or technical, education approved by the county governing body, and to be awarded, on the result of such examination as they shall think fit, to boys and girls who then are, and have for not less than two years been in a county school." At the present such an exhibition would cover all tuition fees for an arts course in one of the Welsh university colleges.

The total number of county scholarships, *i. e.* those directly granted out of the ordinary funds provided under the Act, are to be "not less than one-tenth, nor more than one-fifth of the greatest number of scholars in the school during the last term of the preceding year".

An interesting example of the eagerness with which the pupils from elementary schools are likely to avail themselves of the advantages offered was given a week or two ago (the beginning of January) when 120 candidates competed for 15 scholarships offered in connection with a school to be opened at Carnarvon in February.

One may reasonably conclude from the above that the conflict between the new schools and those secondary schools, whether private or public, already in existence will be a definitely limited one. All preparatory education must be done either in the elementary schools, or at private or public secondary schools (other than those under the act, whilst all the backward and dull of the older pupils will have to be provided for, as a rule, outside the new schools since the leaving age is fixed at seventeen. Thus there will be a healthy stimulus to other schools to offer special training for younger pupils and for the dull ones amongst the older school pupils. The work of private schools is thus likely to become more specialized rather than materially less, and this will almost certainly be to the advantage of the schools and the scholars, for the expenses of working the schools will be considerably less and the efforts of the teachers—who will have to be specialists—will be more concentrated.

*The Schools.* In spite of the success of mixed schools at home and abroad, (especially in the United States) the conference definitely decided against such schools, and in favour of separate and dual (*i. e.* boys and girls under the same roof, and same head



teacher, but otherwise entirely separate) schools. The reason given for refusing to approve of mixed schools, except in country districts—a strange reservation, since there, if anywhere, opportunities and occasions for mischief are most abundant—was that moral discipline suffers in such cases. This opinion was persisted in notwithstanding the fact that evidence was given of the unqualified success of schools known to members of the conference, the absence of any direct conflicting evidence during the discussion, and the success of the national colleges which are worked on the co-education principle. It is very questionable whether the merits of the question at issue were, even remotely, realized by the members of the conference. Yet, strangely enough, these business men recommended schemes involving very great extra expenditure. But then most men are prepared to spend more (especially of other people's money) on their own folly than on another man's wisdom.

Some excellent designs for schools were procured in response to premiums offered by a public spirited individual, and these were copied and placed in the hands of the different county governing bodies.

*The First Fruits.* One school has already commenced work at Bangor and another is to be opened this month (February) at Carnarvon. The former is a transfer, under the Act, of the Friars' Grammar school. It is of course too early yet to speak of any results of the work.

Six schemes have up to the present received the royal assent, and six others will probably receive it within the next three months. Some of the schemes, are being tediously delayed, or seriously mangled, with regard to the scholarship proposals, &c., by the bishops (acting for the Church party) in the House of Lords. Monopolies, especially in religion and education, die hard.

*The Central Welsh Intermediate Education Board.* This, which at present is only a proposal for which a draft scheme has been issued by the charity commissioners, is certainly one of the most valuable outcomes of the educational movement. Although the present proposals for its constitution will render its personnel as objectionable, from the purely educational point of view, as those

bodies already constituted under the Act, yet as a new departure in local government it is full of great possibilities of good. The over centralization of the details of educational government has in the last led to a want of sympathy, a slowness of procedure, and an inelasticity of adaptation, which have been a serious hindrance to progress. A few provincial centres of government would do much to obviate this.

The duties proposed for this board are:—To receive, invest (in the name of the official trustees of charitable funds) and administer certain contributions from the county governing bodies, the treasury, and certain bequests, &c.; to provide scholarships in schools, university colleges, and universities; to make the necessary arrangements for the examination and inspection of schools; administer an exhibition fund for the training of teachers; to organise a pension scheme for teachers; to consider the needs of the schools with regard to books, maps, and other apparatus, and the publication or circulation of information with respect to the same, and to act as agents for supplying the same if necessary; to arrange conferences of governing bodies or of teachers; and generally take steps in furtherance of the objects of the Act. From which it will be seen that a large and important sphere of usefulness is open to it.

In conclusion it may be said that whilst there is much to admire in what has already been done, there is also much to deplore. That it should be possible, after all that the work and wisdom of the great educationists of all countries and times have done for us, for a scheme of education to come into existence through, and have to depend upon, a body of persons without central or local expert influence, criticism, or control is simply astounding. Such a fact goes far to justify and realize the taunt that we are a nation of shopkeepers, and to add to it the rider: with a desire to keep other people's shops. But such is typical of the management of education in England: there is a hopeless and helpless groping in the dark, a mischievous and mistaken—because ignorant—effort to imitate the systems of other nations, a constant realization that we have fallen behind and a hurried scramble to catch up, a notion that it is only a matter of organization and management which importunate politicians, local busybodies, and permanent

officials are competent to undertake, and an implicit conviction that one who has been educated knows all about it. In the face of our national ignorance and fatuity it is simply marvellous that so much has been achieved. One more guiding star of righteous error has been added to a long list, and it can only be hoped that the truth it teaches may soon be fully realized and permanently effective.\*

*Aberystwyth, Wales*

*H. Holman*

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## COMMUNICATION

*To the Editors of The School Review:*

Will you kindly permit me to enter a protest against one of the recommendations of the Committee of Ten on English?

I notice in their report they make the assertion that the paraphrasing of poetry is not to be commended as an exercise in prose composition and that the reducing of poetry to prose is not to be defended. May I ask why?

Paraphrasing is one of the most efficient means of reaching the end desired in English: viz., (1) To enable the pupil to understand the expressed thoughts of others and to give expression to thoughts of his own; and (2) to cultivate a taste for reading, to give the pupil some acquaintance with good literature, and to furnish him with the means of extending that acquaintance.

If then, paraphrasing is good, why not use the best material for that purpose, even if that material include the masterpieces of poetry?

All paraphrasing must take its tone from the original work on which it is based. Strong, forceful sentences lose nothing in the mind of the young student by being translated into his simpler language, while, on the other hand, the pupil's rendition becomes

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\* The following are the chief sources of information which have been consulted:—The authorized reports of the Conference of the Joint Education Committees of Wales and Monmouthshire; the County Schemes; the Welsh Intermediate Education Act; the Draft Scheme of the proposed Central Welsh Board; Acland & Smith's *Studies in Secondary Education*; Ellis & Griffiths' *Intermediate and Technical Education (Wales)*.